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FM THE SITUATION ROOM//TOHAK129//

TO: ADAMS/BAKHTAN/HODMAN FOR THE SECRETARY

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE CONTAINS CODEWORD VIA BLACK PATCH 812222

TOHAK 103

AUGUST 30, 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER

25X1

FROM: THE SITUATION ROOM

SUBJECT: INFORMATION ITEMS

MORI/CDF per C02398110

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

NSA review(s) completed.

SECFLE, MCFARLANE, RODMAN

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CHINA'S VIEWS ON MIDDLE EAST: PEKING'S REACTION TO THE MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEEN PREDICTABLY LOW KEY. THE ONLY PUBLIC CHINESE COMMENTARY SO FAR HAS BEEN A NEWS RELEASE A WEEK AGO THAT SKETCHED THE BACKGROUND OF YOUR LATEST EFFORTS BUT PROVIDED FEW DETAILS. THE REPORT DEVOTED AS MUCH ATTENTION TO MOSCOW'S ATTEMPTS "TO CONTINUE ITS EXPANSION IN THE MIDDLE EAST" AND "SELL OUT" THE ARABS AS IT DID TO THE CURRENT U.S. MEDIATION EFFORT. THE IMPLICATION THAT THE U.S. HAS MAINTAINED THE INITIATIVE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, "BY BRUSHING THE SOVIET UNION ASIDE," CAN BE VIEWED AS AN OBLIQUE STAMP OF APPROVAL. THE OFFICIAL LINE FROM PEKING IS LIKELY TO REMAIN CIRCUMSPECT. THE CHINESE SEEM UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE DEPTH OF MILITANT ARAB OPPOSITION TO A SECOND STAGE SINAI DISENGAGEMENT. FROM PEKING'S POINT OF VIEW, MORE VISIBLE SIGNS OF SUPPORT FOR AN EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT WOULD RUN THE RISK OF UNDERCUTTING CHINA'S EFFORT TO COURT THE ARAB MILITANTS.

SOVIET ROLE OF AIRBORNE TROOPS QUESTIONED: AN INTERNAL SOVIET MILITARY DEBATE ON THE FUTURE ROLE OF SOVIET AIRBORNE TROOPS MAY HAVE SURFACED RECENTLY IN A SERIES OF ARTICLES ON NATO AIRBORNE CAPABILITIES IN RED STAR. COLONEL KELOV,

PSN104773

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THE AUTHOR OF THE ARTICLES AND A FREQUENT COMMENTATOR ON WESTERN MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS, SAID THAT LARGE-SCALE AIRBORNE OPERATIONS WERE A THING OF THE PAST. HE NOTED THAT THEIR EMPLOYMENT REQUIRES THE DIVERSION OF LARGE NUMBERS OF TRANSPORTS, FIGHTER-BOMBERS, AND BOMBER ASSETS THAT COULD BE USED TO BETTER ADVANTAGE FOR OTHER PURPOSES. HE ALSO NOTED MODERN AIR DEFENSE WEAPONRY COULD INFFLICT UNACCEPTABLE LOSSES ON LARGE AIR-TRANSPORTED FORCES. IN CONTRAST, THE AUTHOR HAD NOTHING BUT PRAISE FOR THE HELICOPTER ASSAULT CONCEPT, STATING THAT EXTENSIVE TESTING BY THE "PENTAGON" ALONG WITH THE EXPERIENCES OF VIETNAM HAVE CLEARLY SHOWN THAT AIRMOBILE UNITS HAVE ADVANTAGES OVER OTHER GROUND FORCES. ALTHOUGH COUCHED IN TERMS OF A DISCUSSION OF FOREIGN MILITARY CAPABILITIES, BELOV'S STATEMENTS ARE SIGNIFICANT IN THAT THE USSR HAS HAD THE LARGEST AIRBORNE FORCE FOR YEARS. IT WOULD APPEAR, THEREFORE, THAT SOME SEGMENTS OF THE SOVIET MILITARY -- WITH BELOV AS SPOKESMAN -- ARE LESS THAN SATISFIED WITH MOSCOW'S COMMITMENT TO A LARGE AIRBORNE FORCE AND WOULD PREFER TO PUT MORE RESOURCES INTO HELIBORNE-ASSAULT UNITS. THERE ARE NOW ONLY TWO SOVIET AIRMOBILE BRIGADES IDENTIFIED. DESPITE BELOV'S APPARENT VIEWS, HOWEVER, THERE ARE NO CURRENT INDICATIONS THAT THE SOVIETS INTEND TO DEVIATE FROM THEIR COMMITMENT TO MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE THEIR AIRBORNE DIVISIONS AND SUPPORTING ELEMENTS. WITH GROWING GLOBAL COMMITMENTS, MOSCOW CERTAINLY APPRECIATES THE DEMONSTRATED MOBILITY OF AIRBORNE TROOPS, AN ASSET THAT BELOV RELUCTANTLY ACKNOWLEDGES IN HIS ARTICLE.

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